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RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT 2323  
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS 7178  
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI  
RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT 6354  
RUEHNM/AMEMBASSY NIAMEY 1582  
RUEHBP/AMEMBASSY BAMAKO 0535  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 000492

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [AG](#)  
SUBJECT: MORE GOVERNMENT VENOM DIRECTED AT NGOS

REF: ALGIERS 434

Classified By: Ambassador Robert S. Ford; reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (U) SUMMARY: Algerian political figures continue to attack foreign NGOs working in Algeria. The April 27 press featured the head of the government's Human Rights Commission blaming Al-Jazeera TV and foreign NGOs for "threatening the country's national reconciliation program." Meanwhile, rhetoric from an Islamist parliamentarian asserted that organizations like the Rotary Club undermine Algeria and may even facilitate Christian proselytizing. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) The April 27 Algerian papers widely reported that Farouk Ksentini, the president of the Algerian government's Human Rights Commission, had told the media that he had received complaints from individuals representing 250 "repentant terrorists". According to the article, Ksentini said the individuals told him that the Qatar-based Al-Jazeera news channel, along with unnamed U.S. and European NGOs, had contacted and offered money to "repented terrorists" to speak against Algeria's national reconciliation policy. Ksentini repeated his criticisms in an April 26 interview with Algerian radio, in which he declined to provide the names of the offending NGOs, but maintained that they were "well-known internationally." Arabic language newspaper Sawt Al Ahrar posited that Ksentini was alluding to Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, which many perceived to be hostile to Algeria during the 1990s. (Comment: Ksentini in private nearly always says the right things about human rights, but his public positions are often quite different. End Comment.)

ROTARIANS IN THE CROSSHAIRS  
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13. (U) The April 27 edition of Arabic-language daily El Khabar reported that during a recent parliamentary session, parliamentarian Ali Hafdallah from the Islamist Ennahda party asked Interior Minister Nourredine Zerhouni about the activities of Rotary Clubs in Algeria. According to El Khabar, Hafdallah warned that Algeria was experiencing "a dangerous growth in the number of Rotary Club activities throughout the country, telling Zerhouni that Rotary Clubs were "working with complete freedom and were using their influential contacts with senior state officials." He continued that the "Rotary Clubs have ties with anti-Arab and anti-Muslim, Zionist and Freemason movements", claiming that the work of these associations is inconsistent with the law governing the work of foreign NGOs in Algeria. Hafdallah concluded that it is forbidden to accept NGOs such as the

Rotary Club "that undermine the national integrity, the religion, the language and ethics" of Algeria. According to the article, Hafdallah wondered "why Algeria opens its doors to such NGOs" as he worried that such foreign NGOs will help with proselytizing efforts already underway in Algerian.

#### THE "TUNISIANIZATION" OF ALGERIA?

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14. (C) This latest rhetoric denouncing civil society comes less than a month after Interior Minister Zerhouni denounced NGOs for fomenting an "Orange Revolution" in Algeria, a la Ukraine (reftel). Given the already extreme difficulties faced by Algerian political NGOs seeking to register legally with the Interior Ministry, these public statements do nothing to improve the environment. Algerian political scientist Mohamed Hachmaoui told Ambassador on April 24 that Islamist pressure is building in Algeria, along with traditional Algerian nationalism. The combined pressures are constricting free speech, according to Hachmaoui, who lamented that the future of Algerian politics looks more and more like Tunisia. Poloff last month asked radio personality Mehdi Adjaoude why Algerians seem to accept perceived and actual government restrictions on civil society activities, and Adjaoude responded that Algerians were simply resigned to the government's power.

FORD